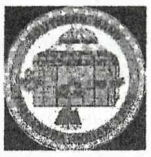
The Roberts Family



The story of the Lost Creek's Roberts families starts with **Margaret Roberts**. She was a free woman of color, born say 1725, and most likely Native American. The 1790 Coastal Carolina Indian Index for Northampton County, lists the Roberts family as Tuscarora Indians. Margaret left a 6 June 1789 Northampton County, North Carolina *will* which was proved in September 1794. She gave two shillings to each of her children, Ishmael, James, and John Roberts, Mary Roberts, Faitha Scott, Christian Stewart, Phebe Roberts, Hannah Roberts, Milla Anderson, and Elizabeth Roberts and gave the remainder of her estate to her daughter Delpha Roberts. She named her daughter Delpha and (her son-in-law) Jeremiah Anderson executors. Her children were **Ishmael**, James, Kinchen, John, Mary, Faitha, Christian, Phebe, Hannah, Milla, Elizabeth, and Delpha.

Ishmael Roberts, born say 1755, was head of a Robeson County household of 10 "other free" in 1790, 15 in 1800, and 14 in Chatham County in 1810. He received pay for Revolutionary War service from 3 June 1777 to 3 June 1778 as a private in Colonel Abraham Shepherd's Company. Colonel Shepherd gave him a certificate which stated that *he was furloughed at Head Quarters Valley Forge to come home with me who was enlisted in my Regiment for the Term of three years - and returned Home with me.* He served in Shepherd's Company of the 10th North Carolina Regiment, enlisted on 3 June 1777 and omitted as a casualty in June 1778.

He entered 100 acres in Robeson County on the north side of Saddle Tree Swamp on 5 September 1787, 100 acres on the north side of Five Mile Branch and 100 acres on the east side of Raft Swamp on 14 February 1788, and 100 acres on the west side of Five Mile Branch on 22 January 1793. He sold land by deed proved in Robeson County on 5 January 1801 and purchased land by deed proved in Robeson County on 6 July 1803. On 18 February 1804 he purchased two tracts of land in Chatham County, one of 250 acres on Bear and Bush Creeks for $450, a second of 100 acres on the waters of the Cape Fear River for $150, and he purchased a further 57 acres on Bush Creek for 75 pounds on 9 January 1805. The sheriff sold 260 acres of this land on 12 February 1808 for a debt of about 16 pounds. However, Ishmael repurchased this same 260 acre tract for about 17 pounds on 14 August 1811. And he purchased 102 acres on Little Lick Creek on 10 April 1818. On 8 and 12 February 1825 he sold (signing) most of his land to his sons: Richard, James, and Aaron. The lands which Ishmael purchased in Robeson County were in the land base of the Lumbee Tribe. The Lumbee Tribe is an amalgamated tribe, that is, it's membership was made up of refugees from various tribes fleeing from European expansion. The Lumbee Tribe has biographies on some of its early members, and the Roberts family bio reads as follows:

> *ROBERTS In what may have been the first act of violence by a Lumbee Indian in current Robeson County, James Roberts shot James McCullam five times 29 Jan. 1754, in S1. Martin's Parish, Bladen County. The murder came to court I Feb. 1754 (Secretary of State, Committee of Claims, Coroner's Inquests, 1738-1775, SS 316, N.C. Archives). Reuben Roberts of Bladen sold two tracts of 310 acres north and northeast of Drowning Creek to Thomas Owen 6 July 1773 (Deed Book B, 29-30). He lived near Soloman James and Richard Smith. Ishmael Roberts, probably Lumbee, was living on Saddletree Swamp near Jacob Blount, Phillip Blount, Robert Willis, John Baggett and Thomas Ivey before 12 July 1788 (Deed Book A, 282-283). He bought 185 additional acres from Lewis Jenkins 15 Oct. 1790 east of Saddletree Swamp (B, 166-168). He appears on Saddletree Swamp in the 1790 census. Ishmael patented 100 acres east of Raft Swamp adjacent to fellow Lumbee Thomas Jackson, Lewis and Edward Jenkins 26 Nov. 1789 (B,*

314, H, 109-110). Two Roberts families, Sampson and Etheldred, age 55-100, and both Mulatoe were in the 1830 census of Robeson. Several families named Roberts, all listed as mulatto, appear near each other in the 1850 census close to the Lumbee families of Hammonds, Revels, Briant, Jacobs and Chavis. All six families were listed as mulatoe. Roberts was listed as an Indian name in Lumberton township in the 1870 census of Robeson. The name was self-identified as Indian in the 1900 Census of Robeson. One family was listed in the 1900 Indian Census Schedule in Robeson County. Lucy Roberts Harris, daughter of White Troy Roberts Jr. of Lumberton, came from an affluent family. Her brother, Larry Roberts, was a longtime police chief in Pembroke. Roberts was listed as Indian in the 1930 census of Pembroke Township. Death records show the Indian name of Roberts in 1916 in Lumberton and Pembroke townships. They were related to the Oxendine and Smith families. See Native Visions, Lumberton, N.C., August, 2005, for Lumberton family of Roberts. Cited at Deep Branch Cemetery and New Bethel Methodist Church cemetery, Fairmont, by Jane Blanks Barnhill, Sacred Grounds, 2007, a listing of 162 Lumbee cemeteries of Robeson County.

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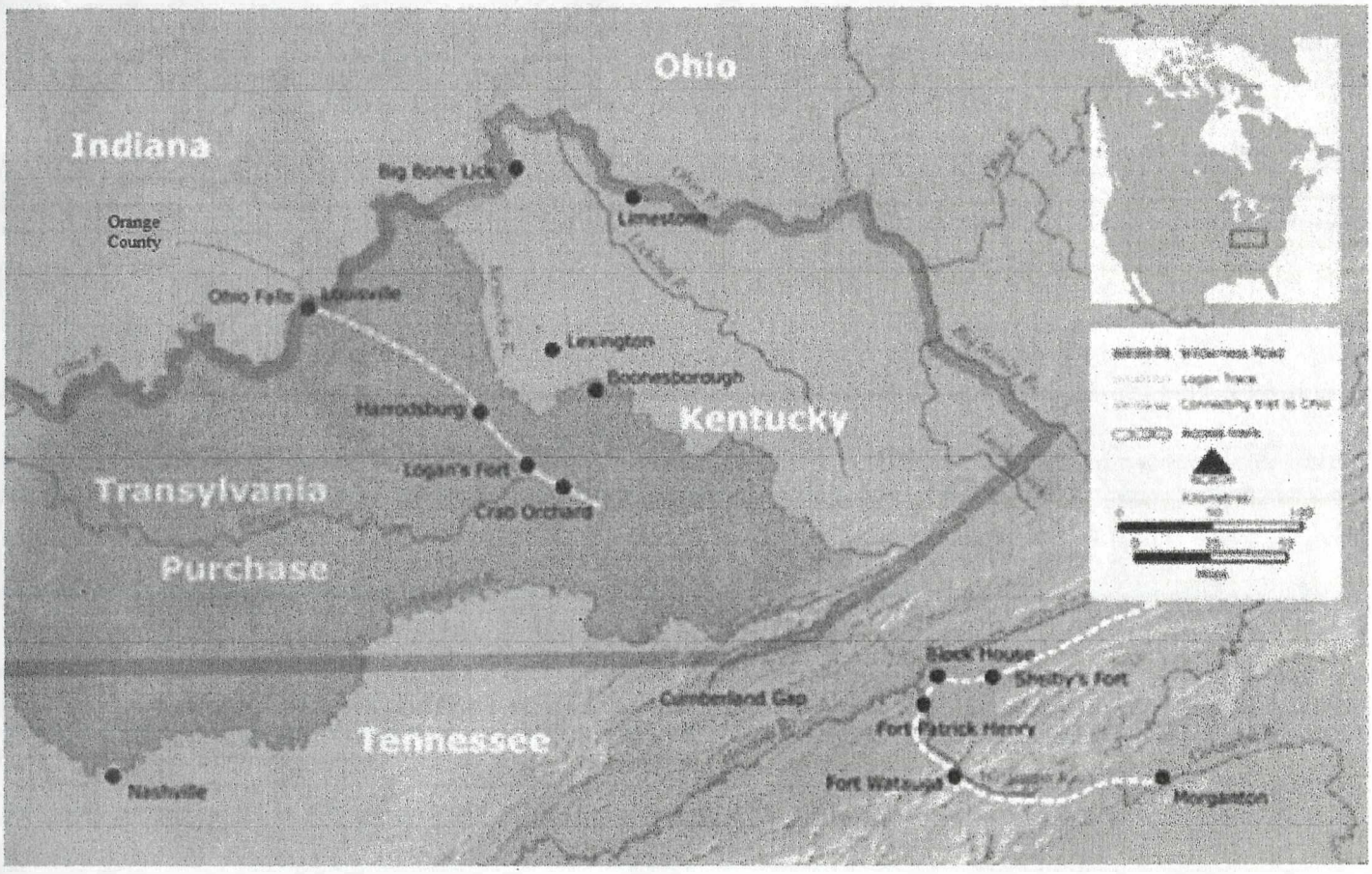
By his 12 July 1826 Chatham County will, he left his land on the west side of Bush Creek to his wife **Silvey** and then to his grandson Ishmael, oldest son of Zachariah. He also left one dollar to a list of persons, no relationship stated (who were identified as his children in his May 1829 Estate Papers), and he willed that his land where John Archie (Archer, his son-in-law) was living was to be sold and divided among his wife and a second list of persons (which included members of the first list), no relationship stated, and left $20 for the schooling of his grandson Thomas Roberts. When the will was offered for probate in the Tuesday, May 1827 session of the Chatham County court, the jury ruled that it was his will as regards his personal property but not as regards his real estate. A committee was appointed to settle the problem, and their report was recorded in the Monday, May 1828 session. His estate papers listed seventeen persons and called them his children, but at least two of them, Ishmael and Elias, were probably his grandchildren. The fifteen other persons named in his will and estate papers were Ethelred, Zachariah, Kinchen, Jonathan, Elizabeth, Benjamin, Elias, Aaron, Margaret, James, Richard, Mary, Delphy, Rebecca, Lewis, and Pardon Boin.

The migration to Indiana

To get to Indiana from North Carolina, the migrants had to travel thru the Appalachian Mountains. Daniel Boone had carved out a trail thru the mountains from North Carolina thru Kentucky, which became known as the Wilderness Road.

The Wilderness Road



The **Anderson, Archer, Burnett, Chavis, Jasper, Roberts, Scott, Thomas,** and **Trevan** families, settled in Orange County, Indiana prior to settling in Lost Creek. The Quakers had established the **Lick Creek Settlement**, in Orange County, where arriving "people of color", were welcomed and assisted. They were classified as "indentures" who worked on the Quaker farms, and on community projects, for which they were paid. They later used these funds to purchase property in other settlements. Not all of the Roberts family members resettled in the Lost Creek Settlement of Vigo County. Some resettled in Hamilton County, Indiana and established the "Roberts Settlement" there. Members of the Roberts family who were buried in the Lick Creek Settlement Cemetery were:

Roberts, Alice; wife of Nelson Roberts; b. 17 Jul 1824, d. 19 Sep 1858.
Roberts, Ishmael; **Not the same Ishmael as the parent who died in North Carolina**
Roberts, James; son of Ann Roberts; b. 3 Oct 1853, d. 16 Jan 1877.
Roberts, Mary E.; wife of Eli Roberts; b. 1 Nov 1812, d. 2 May 1867;

Bowen Roberts is reputed to have been one of the first Roberts to leave North Carolina, and come to Indiana. "Pardon Boin", (his given name), was one of the earliest settlers of the town of Spencer, Owen County, Indiana, where he purchased Lot numbers 251, 261, 119, 228, 126, 5, 52, and 53 between August 1825 and June 1831, and he received a patent for 40 acres in Lafayette Township in 1836. He purchased lots 105 and 109 in November of 1826, from **Richard Walden**, son of Eaton Walden and Nanney Evans. He was called Bowen Roberts when he purchased land from the other heirs of Ishmael Roberts by deed proved in Chatham County court in the Monday, February 1830 session. Before travelling back to Owen County, he obtained "free papers" in Chatham County on 1 March 1830 and recorded them in Owen County on 31 October 1831. They mentioned his wife Elizabeth and daughter Patsy and stated that he was the son of Ishmael Roberts, Sr., an "old revolutionary" who had been

living in Chatham County upwards of twenty years. They also mentioned Ishmael's widow Silvia and her daughter Rebecca. Pardon was head of an Owen County household of 5 "free colored" in 1830. Bowen is reputed to have convinced his siblings to come back to Indiana with him, after the settlement of his father's Will.

Ethelred Roberts, born say 1780, entered land in Robeson County on 5 March 1801, and purchased land by deed proved in Robeson County on 8 January 1805. He was head of a Robeson County household of 4 "other free" in 1810, 9 "free colored" in 1820, and was living in Robeson County in May 1829 when his father's Chatham County estate was settled. He and his wife **Dicey Locklear** were mentioned in the free papers of their son Elias. Ethelred is still in Robeson County when the 1840 census was taken. He does appear in the 1850 census for Orange County, Indiana. He died in Orange County, Indiana. Ethelred and Dicey were the parents of Elias, Willis E. and Anna.

Elias, son of Ethelred, born about 1815, a few months more than fifteen years of age in March 1830 according to free papers which were written for him in Robeson County on 8 June 1834 while he was a resident of Owen County, Indiana. He left Robeson County to go to Indiana with his uncles Aaron Roberts and Pardon Bowen Roberts, the latter of whom resided in Chatham County in 1830. Elias settled in Hamilton County, Indiana in what became known as the Roberts Settlement.

Willis E., son of Ethelred, born about 1822, emigrated to Indiana around 1848. He was married to Sarah Jane Hammonds on 22 Dec 1842, in North Carolina. He had settled in the Lost Creek Settlement by 1860, and they had a son, John who was born in the Lost Creek Settlement, around 1863. John married Julia Bannister in Vigo County, on 7 Sep 1887. John and Julia had 10 children. They moved to Yakima, Washington between 1900 and 1910. One of their 4 sons was named **Herman Willis Roberts**.

Herman Willis Roberts, born 7 Jan 1896, was elected chief of the Wenatchee Indian tribe in 1932, and titled Chief Kiutus Tecumseh. After becoming tribal chief, he was twice invited to the White House, once by Mrs. Herbert Hoover, and then by Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. Kiutus Tecumseh, married **Marie Jefferson**, a member of the Iowa Sac & Fox Tribe, on 3 May 1943, in Grant County, Washington.

A bio for him states:

Chief Kiutus Tecumseh, born Herman Willis Roberts, was a famous Indian tenor, lived in Cashmere and head of the Wenatchee, Washington tribe. His parents were John W Roberts & Julia Bannister. They were both born in Indiana and married there. They had a large family. John's father was from North Carolina. Kiutus was also the great grandson of Chief Tecumseh who fought in the battle of Tippecanoe in 1811.

Benjamin, born say 1792, married **Sally Archer**, 30 June 1817 Orange County, North Carolina bond, Jesse Archer bondsman. He was one of the freeholders (or son of one) who was ordered to work on the road from Deep River to Little Lick Creek in Chatham County in May 1817. Benjamin was head of a Chatham County household of 6 "free colored" in 1820 and 6 in Orange County, Indiana, in 1840. He and his wife Sally obtained free papers in Chatham County on 6 November 1824 and recorded them in Orange County, Indiana on 11 February 1833. He is listed in Vigo County by the 1880 census.

Archibald, son of Benjamin and Sally, was born in 1814 in North Carolina. He is found in 1850 Vigo County census in the household of cousin **Lucinda Roberts Stewart** and her husband **Dixon Stewart**. He married **Evaline Artis** on 5 Feb 1852 in Vigo County, Indiana. He was living in the Underwood Settlement in 1860, and in Stafford County, Kansas in 1880. He died in Stafford County, Kansas on 22 Nov 1893.

Elias, son of Ishmael, born say 1793, obtained free papers in Chatham County on 10 February 1823 which stated that he was married to **Nancy Archie**, the daughter of Thomas Archie, and that they had been living in Chatham County for twenty-three years. Elias recorded his free papers in Orange County, Indiana on 20 February 1833. He stayed in Orange County until his death in 1866.

Aaron, born say 1795, married **Jary Teary (Terry)** 10 October 1816 Robeson County bond, William Carter bondsman. He purchased 100 acres in Chatham County from his father for $150 on 12 February 1825. On 13 April 1830 he obtained Chatham County "free papers" in which the clerk stated that he was a "free man of color," the son of Ishmael Roberts, an old Revolutionary soldier who served under Colonel Shepherd. Aaron had a wife named Sarah, the daughter of Edward (Etheldred) Newsom, another "free man of color" who served in the Revolution, and a daughter named Candassa. Sarah was mentioned in her father's 20 December 1820 Robeson County, North Carolina will. Their daughter Candace married John Harper on 15 December 1842 in Owen County. Aaron was head of a Washington Township, Owen County, Indiana household of 3 "free colored" in 1830 and 5 in 1840. Aaron died in Owen, County.

James, born say 1800, married **Polly Stewart**, 12 February 1822 Chatham County bond, Thomas Cottrell bondsman. He purchased 62-1/2 acres in Chatham County on the south side of the Cape Fear River on Bush Creek from his father for $150 on 8 February 1825 and sold land by deed proved in Chatham County on Wednesday, May 1837 session. He is head of a Owen County, Indiana household of 11 in 1840, and a Vigo County household of 10 in 1840.

Richard, born say 1802, purchased 100 acres in Chatham County on Bush Creek from his father for $400 on 8 February 1825. His wife was **Edith Newsom**, daughter of Nathaniel Newsom and Edy Hawley. He sold land by deed proved in Chatham County on Wednesday, May term, 1837. Richard may have been the Richard Roberts who was head of a Ripley Township, Rush County, Indiana household of 5 "free colored" in 1840.

Aaron, son of Richard and Edith, was born in 1834 in Indiana. He is found in 1850 Vigo County census in the household of cousin **Lucinda Roberts Stewart** and her husband **Dixon Stewart**. Aaron married **Louisa J. Chavous** on 23 Jan 1856 in Vigo County, Indiana. He died on 9 Sep 1920 in Vigo County, Indiana.

Delphy, born say 1810. She was married to **Henry Trevan** before February 1830 when the deed for land they inherited from Ishmael Roberts was proved in Chatham County. Henry is head of a Orange County, Indiana household of 6 in 1830, and a Vigo County household of 11 in 1840.

Mary "Polly" born say 1790. She was married to Moses Archer before 1828, Moses was the head of a household of 4 in the Orange County, Indiana 1830 census, and household of 3 in the 1850 Vigo County census.

Kinchen, born say 1784, head of a Chatham County household of 6 "other free" in 1810. On 15 August 1821 he purchased 154 acres in Chatham County on the south side of Cape Fear River near the Ferry Road and Drake's land for $430 and sold this land seven years later on 25 December 1828 for $200. On 3 April 1829 he sold the 150 acres on Bush Creek which he

received as one of the heirs of Ishmael Roberts. He was head of a Orange County, Indiana household of 7 in 1830, and a Vigo County household of 4 in 1840. He was head of a Lost Creek Township, Vigo County, Indiana, household in 1850. He was a sixty-five-year-old, born in Virginia, with $3,000 estate, living with Nancy, fifty-eight years old, born in North Carolina. Adjusting for inflation, his $3,000 would be worth ~$100,000 today. His 300 acres of land would be worth 1.5 million dollars.

Kinchen Roberts and **Nancy Chavis** had the following children:

Lucinda Roberts was born in 1809 in Wake County, North Carolina. She died in Dec 1885 in Lost Creek, Vigo, Indiana. She received equal parts of her father's estate as part of her father's 9 Jul 1870 Will. She married **Dixon Stewart**, son of James Stewart and Sally Evans, on 24 Jan 1830 in Monroe, Indiana. He was born on 08 Aug 1801 in Wake, North Carolina. He died on 30 Mar 1889 in Lost Creek, Vigo, Indiana, USA.

Banister Roberts was born about 1811. He died on 13 Aug 1832 in Vigo, Indiana. He was the first to die within the new Lost Creek Settlement. He was buried on the back portion of his father's property, which was later set aside to become the Roberts Cemetery.

Hezekiah Roberts was born in 1812 in North Carolina. He died on 14 Feb 1902 in Lost Creek, Vigo County, Indiana. He married (1) **Nancy A. Powell** in Apr 1845 in Vigo County, Indiana. She was born in 1810 in North Carolina. He married (2) **Nancy Jackson** in 1851 in Vigo County, Indiana. She was born in 1810 in North Carolina. He married (3) **Selina Jane Poston**, daughter of Daniel Poston and Lucy Jackson, on 19 Sep 1887 in Vigo County, Indiana. She was born about 1825 in North Carolina. She died on 19 May 1905. Hezekiah received $500 as part of his father's 9 Jul 1870 Will, as well as equal parts of his father's estate. A local biographer wrote this about Hezekiah:

> *H. ROBERTS, farmer, Burnett, was born in North Carolina in 1810, and came to Monroe county with his parents when sixteen years of age, thence to Vigo county in 1832. He at once became a resident of Lost Creek township, and began working at home on his father's farm until he was a grown man. After this he began for himself, and by hard work he has become the owner of a fine farm, consisting of 325 acres, on which he has made most of the improvements. In 1851 he was married to Miss Nancy JACKSON, and they have one son, Thompson, who resides at home and is engaged in farming.*
>
> ***HISTORY OF VIGO AND PARKE COUNTIES, Together With Historic Notes on the Wabash Valley*** *H.W. Beckwith - 1880 Lost Creek Twp. - p. 393*

Jane Roberts was born about 1812 in North Carolina. She married **Abel Anderson**, son of George Anderson and Morning Taborn, on 12 Jan 1832 in Orange, Indiana. He was born in 1807 in North Carolina.

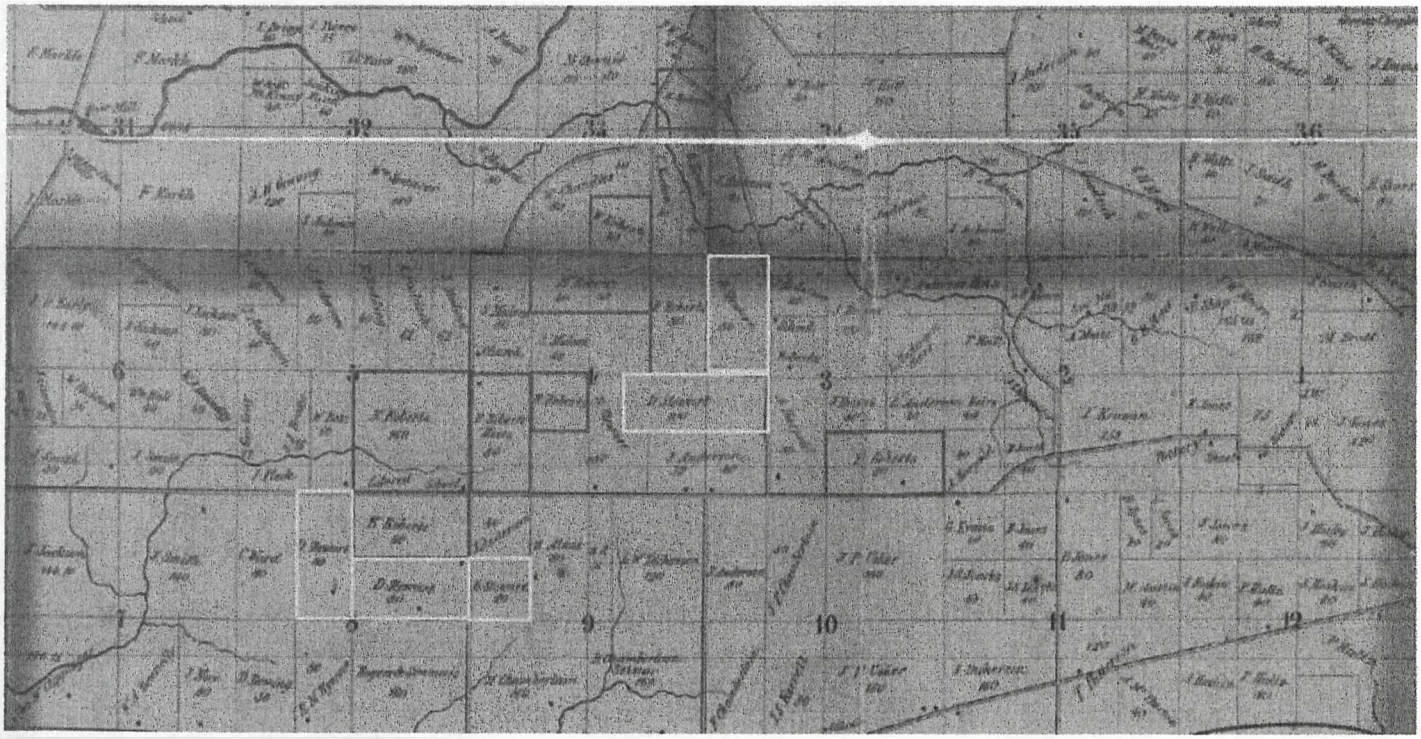
Benjamin Roberts was born in 1815 in North Carolina. He married (1) **Mary Ann Chavis** on 17 Jun 1841 in Vigo County, Indiana. She died 1 Jun 1865 in Vigo County, Indiana. He married (2) **Sarah Larter** on 18 Feb 1864 in Vigo County. She was born 12 Dec 1834 in North Carolina. She died on 6 Mar 1906 in Lost Creek. Benjamin received $400 as part of his father's 9 Jul 1870 Will, as well as equal parts of his father's estate.

Reden Roberts was born about 1825 in North Carolina. He received equal parts of his father's estate as part of his father's 9 Jul 1870 Will. He died on 14 Dec 1883 in Vigo County, Indiana. He married **Alvira Bonds** on 18 Apr 1871 in Vigo, Indiana. She was born about 1837 in Virginia. A local biographer wrote this about Redden:

> *REDEN ROBERTS, farmer, Terre Haute, was born in North Carolina, and came to Vigo county with his parents in about 1832. He has been a resident of the county all his life. In 1872 he married Alvira BONDS. Mr. ROBERTS has been a hard-working and energetic man. He is the owner of a fine farm, consisting of 300 acres, on which he has made all the improvements. He is considered a practical farmer. In politics Mr. ROBERTS takes sides with the republican party.*
>
> ***HISTORY OF VIGO AND PARKE COUNTIES, Together With Historic Notes on the Wabash Valley** H.W. Beckwith - 1880 Lost Creek Twp. - p. 393*

Joseph Roberts was born in 1837 in Lost Creek, Vigo, Indiana. He married **Lucy Emily Estell**, daughter of Abraham Estell and Selina Jane Poston, on 25 Apr 1861 in Vigo County, Indiana. She was born on 05 Mar 1844 in Illinois. She died on 04 Apr 1914 in Otter Creek, Vigo County, Indiana.

By 1858, Kinchen Roberts and his family members owned a sizable share of the Lost Creek properties. Lands controlled by Roberts males are outlined in red, and the property outlined in pink is owned by daughter Lucinda Roberts and husband Dixon Stewart.



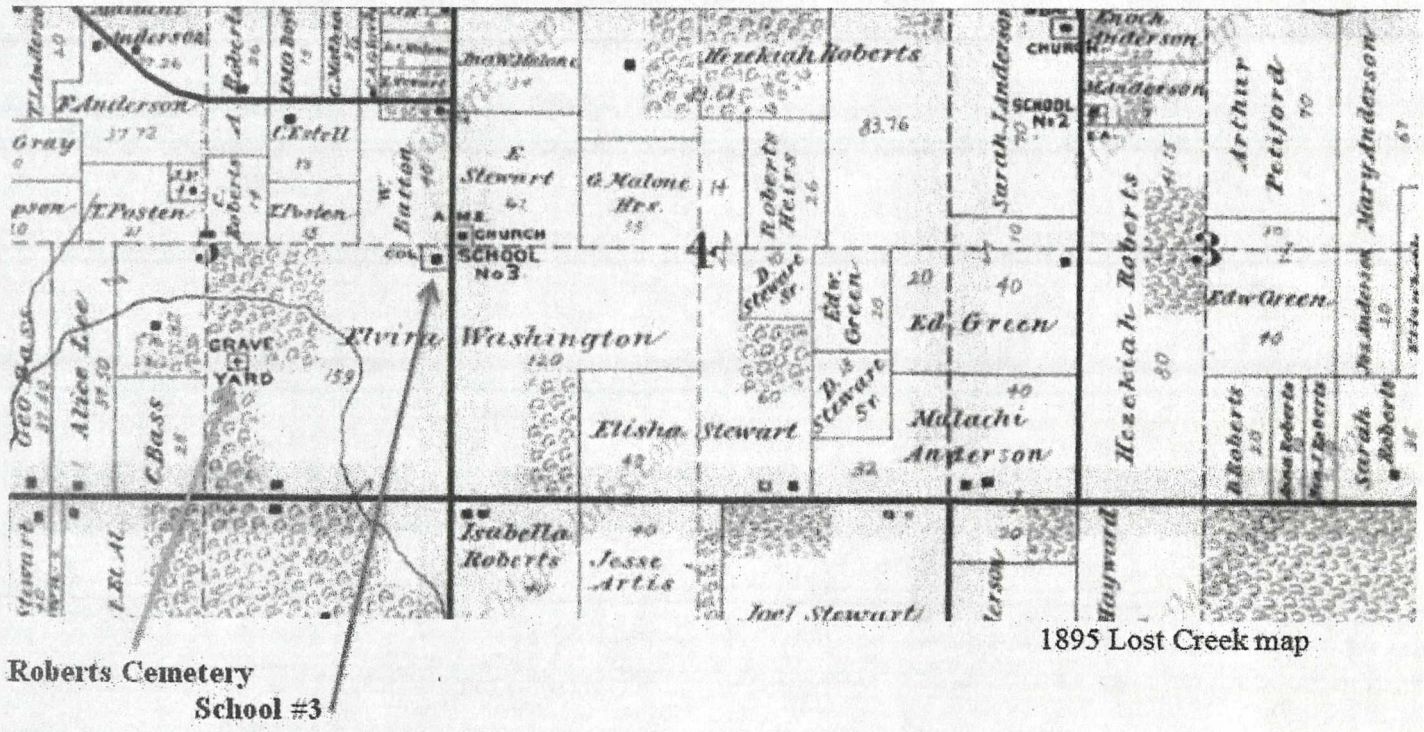
The Roberts Cemetery

Kinchen Roberts owned 280 acres at the intersection of Hunt Road and Fort Harrison Road. In 1832, Kinchen's son **Banister**, was the first to die in Lost Creek, and was buried on Kinchen's property. In 1870, Kinchen's son **Reden**, set aside 1½ acres of land, where his brother Banister and other pioneer family members were buried, for use as a community cemetery. This cemetery was commonly known as the "Lost Creek Cemetery". However, most of the death certificates written after 1915 list this

cemetery as the "Shepard Cemetery", most likely because access to the cemetery was across property owned by Thomas F. Shepard, which was adjacent to Reden Roberts.

The cemetery was not subdivided off from the rest of Reden Roberts property, so after his death, and the subsequent death of his widow in 1928, the land was sold, and access to the cemetery was restricted by the new property owners. The cemetery was closed in 1929. The only recorded burial in the cemetery after it was closed, was that of Jemima Stewart Smith, in 1941. Her death certificate lists the place of burial as the "Sheppard Cemetery" [sic].

The Shepard property was sold in 1947, and the new land owners allowed their cattle to graze in the cemetery. The cattle displaced and/or destroyed many of the tombstones. In 1991, the current owners of what was the "Roberts" property, subdivided the cemetery off from the rest of the property. A fence was erected around the cemetery in 1993, and the cemetery was officially named the **Roberts Cemetery,** in commemoration of Reden Roberts.



1895 Lost Creek map

Reden Roberts died in 1883, and did not have any living children at the time of his death. His property holdings went to his wife, Elvira. Elvira married John W. Washington in 1885. At that point, the Roberts family lost any rights they may have had to Reden's property. After the deaths of Elvira, the properties were sold to divide the proceeds between the heirs of the Bonds family.

Additional source: Paul Heinegg @ http://www.freeafricanamericans.com/Virginia_NC.htm